

PROCEEDINGS

27th Convention International Brotherhood of Teamsters



TEAMSTERS
MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

FIRST DAY

Monday, June 26, 2006

Paris, Las Vegas
Las Vegas, Nevada



FIRST DAY—MORNING SESSION

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, the Conference and the Teamsters support the efforts of GCC Locals to coordinate their bargaining with the company, so locals cannot be played off one another and a stronger contract can be won for all members at the company; and

FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the Conference and the Teamsters recognize the difficulty of organizing Quebecor through the conventional NLRB process, and we therefore need to use all of our combined GCC and Teamster power to wage a strategic campaign that puts the greatest possible pressure on the company to win fair treatment, organizing rights, and good contracts for workers.

GENERAL PRESIDENT HOFFA: Mike 2.

GCC PRESIDENT TEDESCHI: I'm president of the Graphic Communications Conference of Teamsters. I'm proud to be here as a Teamster and even prouder to be here as a Hoffa-Keegel supporter.

(Applause)

More and more we see corporations in the United States and Canada buying up smaller companies, creating huge conglomerates. These corporations then squeeze the workers by reducing pensions, health care, full-time workers and wages. The only effective way for us to counter this is to fight back on a national and in some cases global levels and campaigns.

We must show these corporations such as Quebecor World that the union will stand up for our members. The Graphic Communications Conference started fighting this battle over three years ago. We started before we joined the Teamsters Union last year. And now as Teamsters, with your power and resources, we have progressed by already organizing over 500 Quebecor workers.

This fight can and will be won, helping the more than 7,000 present GCC Teamster members. We will not back down and I ask you on behalf of the Graphic Communications Teamster workers to support and pass this resolution. Thank you.

(Applause)

GENERAL PRESIDENT HOFFA: I take that as a motion. Do we have a second?

...The motion was seconded by several unidentified delegates.

GENERAL PRESIDENT HOFFA: I hear a second.

All those in favor of the Quebecor resolution, signify by saying aye.

Anybody opposed?

It is adopted.

(Applause)

We'd like to take a moment to recognize some of our retirees in the hall. Former General Executive Board Member John Rabine.

(Applause)

Don West, Ed Lawson and Ben Leal.

(Applause)

Former IBT Chief Accountant Doug Heim.

(Applause)

Retiree Director Ed Scribner.

(Applause)

Former Carhaul Director Doc Conder.

(Applause)

Former president of the Ohio Conference, Harold Lew.

(Applause)

Former Joint Council 42 President, Mike Wylie.

(Applause)

Vinnie Murphy from the Brewery and Soft Drink Conference.

(Applause)

And Local 730's Eula Cleveland, let's hear it for her.

(Applause)

Let's hear it for all our retirees.

(Applause)

It's now lunchtime. Let's stand recessed until two o'clock. I'll see you then.

(At 12:22 p.m., the Convention recessed, to reconvene at 2:00 p.m.)



FIRST DAY MONDAY AFTERNOON SESSION June 26, 2006

...The Convention was called to order at 2:12 p.m., General President Hoffa presiding.

...Greetings from celebrities were shown to the delegation, via video.

(Applause)

THE ANNOUNCER: Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome Teamsters General President, James P. Hoffa.

(Applause)

GENERAL PRESIDENT HOFFA: We're back. Hope you had a good lunch. Did you?

(Applause)

Okay. Well, we're going to start off this afternoon's session. We have a very special guest, a friend of ours who I've known for over ten years. He's a man who has really stood for Teamsters democracy. When we didn't have any friends, he was a friend of the Teamsters to make sure we had free and democratic elections. He has a lot of guts and he stood up for us.

He is my dear friend, Congressman Pete Hoekstra, from Michigan, who is head and

Chairman of the House Intelligence Committee.

Let's hear it for Pete Hoekstra.

(Standing ovation)

HONORABLE PETER HOEKSTRA U.S. House of Representatives (R) Michigan

Thanks, Jim. It is great to be with you today in Las Vegas. What an awesome crowd, and it's a privilege for me to be invited to spend a few minutes to talk with you.

Many of you may have forgotten, but the Teamsters and myself have a pretty unique history. It's 1996, I'm a relatively new member of the House of Representatives, and I'm bicycling through my district in the summer of that year. I get a phone call, and it's from a name that you maybe all know and in many cases you're maybe not that fond of, but in this case he was firmly aligned with the Teamsters.

He said, "Pete, you're Chairman on the House Committee on Oversight, and we need

you to do oversight of the Teamsters elections in 1996." A phone call from Newt Gingrich.

(A chorus of "Boos" from the delegation.)

But he was with you. And it's kind of like, "Hey, Newt, I think I've got a bad connection. You want me to do what?"

He says, "I need you to take a look and make sure that in this election the Teamsters have a fair election."

We not only had one election in 1996, but when, through the work of our committee it was identified that there were a number of issues with the first election, we helped make sure that you had a fair election and that you had a rerun election and a second election.

(Applause)

I think in many ways that's what started this union back on to the road to recovery, a road that has been extensively monitored by the federal government, by the courts, the Justice Department, the Labor Department, and the International Review Board.

This process over almost 20 years has cost this union and its membership millions of dollars, directly and indirectly. Your union leadership has shown great patience and restraint in working with the International Review Board. Some would say it's essential that we develop a firm timeline for withdrawal of the IRB from the Brotherhood of Teamsters.

(Standing ovation)

That's not even the punch line. Let me be a little bit clearer. I've been saying this for the last five years. While this organization is not perfect, it has earned the right to be free from the onerous consent decree. The consent decree must be ended and it must be ended now.

(Standing ovation)

No entity in the United States of America should be under the control of the federal government for almost a generation. It is time to give this union back to its leadership, but more importantly, back to its membership.

(Applause)

This union deserves better treatment from the courts and it deserves better treatment from the current administration than it has received.

(Applause)

Now, I'm a conservative Republican from the state of Michigan. I just wanted to make sure that when we started off today we all recognize that there are things that bring us together and things that we can agree on and things that we need to work together on. We've established that. We've established that this consent decree has got to go.

And with that, I just really want to get back to a normal opening and say thank you and thank you to your leadership for allowing me to be here today. Your leadership in Washington has truly shown a unique ability to get things done. I can say from personal experience that on certain occasions we agree on some very important issues. And when we agree, I feel comfortable because I know I've got a lot of support, and together we can get some critical things done.

On other occasions I find that we may disagree. It makes me nervous, because if I'm in disagreement with the Teamsters, I know that it's going to make it more difficult for me to get done what I need to get done.

But the good thing about your leadership is its demonstrated ability to focus on what is important for America's workers. They're not tied to a particular political party or a particular partisan position. The leadership of this union is clearly demonstrating that it wants to be the voice of America's workers. And on an issue-by-issue basis it will look at what side it is going to take based on what is best for its membership and for what is best for America's workers. And that's what makes this union unique in Washington and which makes it more effective than almost any other organization. It is filling a huge vacuum in the political debate today. It's filling the vacuum by being the spokesperson for America's workers.

(Applause)

Let me just cover a few of the issues in Washington that we're working on and that we're working on together. A few years ago this union took a unique step under the leadership of your President, Jim Hoffa, and broke with a number of other unions by saying, "Drilling in a small little piece of Alaska is good for national security, it is good for America and it's good for America's workers, because it opens up the opportunity to create thousands of new jobs in America, many of which will be organized labor. We're going to support drilling in ANWR."

(Applause)

You recognized that from a national security standpoint. You took a look at it and you said, "For America's workers, for future generations, can we really be in a position where we import 60 percent of our oil from overseas?" We're not that nervous about importing oil from Canada and Mexico, our two largest suppliers. But after that, our suppliers become rather an ugly neighborhood — Venezuela, Saudi Arabia and Nigeria. You guys recognize 60 percent of our oil coming from overseas and coming from that type of a neighborhood is not a good place for America to be. We need to do something different.

You also said that for America's workers, if we can take the opportunity to drill in ANWR, to drill off the continental shelf, it's going to be a boom for our economy. All of that drilling and all of that infrastructure is going to create lots of jobs. If we can harness new opportunities and energy and start paying American farmers for their corn rather than Saudi Arabia for our oil, building new refineries, building nuclear power plants and making us more energy independent, means that we end up cycling those dollars through our economy rather than sending them outside of the United States.

(Applause)

Together, this union and this Congress can create new opportunities in an emerging field of energy that will improve our national security, create perhaps up to a million new jobs and secure America's future. These efforts help stabilize energy prices, make us more secure and grow our economy.

I've got another issue that we've worked together on, and you guys have been absolutely fantastic. We have a very unique process in the United States. It kind of reminds me of China. Each year, thousands of American workers lose their jobs because federal prison industries come in to government agencies and say, "You're looking at buying this commodity or this product? That's great. You're going to buy it with prison labor." I thought only in China would the government give preference to prison labor over workers in the private sector. But it's going on right here in the United States.

A few years ago federal prison industries was the fastest growing business in the office furniture industry, an industry that has three of the four largest companies headquartered in my district. Those companies were in decline as federal prison industries and their volume was skyrocketing.

With your help, hopefully this year every single government contract will be open to competitive bidding in the private sector so that American workers will actually be able to compete against American prisoners for government contracts. I think that's kind of a unique concept.

(Applause)

On a final note, a legislative note, we're also working with you on an issue that's important to many of you as truck drivers. Our understanding is that to get a hazardous material endorsement, you've got to go to a number of different places to get a permit and to have background checks. Under federal legislation, which I've cosponsored, we'll make sure that you can go to one

place, get one background check and make sure that that one background check will get you your hazardous material endorsement.

(Applause)

In Washington, we need to do the big things right and we need to get the little things right.

Let me move on to just two other issues. I'm firmly convinced that labor unions have a necessary role in America. American workers need a voice for equality and fairness. Organized labor can provide it and you may be the only ones that have the opportunity and the legitimacy to provide that voice for American labor.

I had dinner with a few of your executives last night, a few of your leaders, and we were talking about this. I think maybe the number that you heard earlier was close to 400, the number that I had heard was around 200 to 250. What is 250? 250 is the average income of a CEO versus a worker in their company. That is an obscene number that CEOs today are making on average 200 to 250 times the average income in their company. It is absolutely the wrong place for leadership in corporate America to be.

(Applause)

I have a company in my district that has just been badgered by the financial institutions, by financial analysts because it limited the amount that they were willing to pay their executives. They actually believed that by narrowing the gap between their executives and their employees, they would create a healthy business environment. The business analysts said in that kind of environment where you have narrowed that gap, you'll never be able to attract the kind of quality you need to run the company.

I totally disagree. I think that is the model of a successful business where people at the top and people at the bottom of an organization are closer together and they share the values and the visions for where that company needs to go. But what it also shows to you is how far we need to go in America to bring that back into reality of

equality and fairness between the top of an organization and the bottom of an organization.

I think part of the problem that you see today is that businesses in America are global businesses. They are run by global management teams that reward their shareholders, they reward their top management, but they do not have loyalty to their workers.

(Applause)

They're willing to move a production facility from the United States to China, to India, wherever, for the almighty dollar. American workers need someone to stand up for them to make sure that they are represented in corporate board rooms where there is no allegiance to workers and no allegiance to American workers.

I believe the Teamsters and the Teamster leadership have the opportunity to lead the Change to Win coalition to become the premier voice for American workers on key issues: Trade, health care, pensions, immigration, Social Security reform. In each of those issues, there needs to be a strong voice for American workers if we are to get a fair and equitable solution; and right now there is a vacuum and it needs to be filled. The challenge to you is to fill it and to represent America's workers. They need you.

(Applause)

On a personal note, Jim indicated that I chair the House Intelligence Committee. What that means is that my committee has the responsibility of overseeing all of our foreign intelligence capabilities, which puts me smack-dab in the middle of the war against radical Islam and the war against al Qaeda.

Just remember, this is a war we did not start. We talk a lot about 9/11, and that's a very important date in America's history. But you also need to take a look at 2/26, February 26, because on February 26 was the first time that America was attacked at the World Trade Centers. Six people were killed and a thousand

people were injured. But for almost a decade, until 9/11, we walked away from that threat and we ignored it. We have been under attack for more than a decade. And recent arrests in Toronto and Miami show that the threat is still there and that the threat is real.

Al Qaeda is an organization with no borders. They don't wear uniforms and they attack civilians at will. They attack civilians as a target of choice, not accident. They are adept at using the Internet, the media to win public opinion, to get converts and recruits.

Each and every day America is now taking the fight to terrorists so that they will not have a single safe haven to plan or prepare for their next attack against our homeland. It's an ongoing and difficult effort but, through persistence and patience, we will get to where we need to be. We need to win this war against radical Islam.

This is not the place to argue specific strategies as to how we're going to do this. We do need to have a vigorous debate about how to wage and win this war. It's probably the toughest war that we have ever been engaged in. And we have to do it in such a way that it is always fully supportive of our young men and women in uniform.

As part of that war, I offer my sincere appreciation to this union, to those of its members who have fought in the war, to those in this union and their families who have paid the ultimate price, and to all in this union who recognize that it is because of the sacrifice of others that we can have this discussion today.

Even though we have our differences, our love for and commitment to the United States of America means that we have much more in common than what separates us.

May God bless our troops. May God bless this union, your families. And may God bless America. Thank you very much for having me here today.

(Standing ovation)

DELEGATE TYSON JOHNSON, IBT Local 745, Dallas, TX: Mr. Chairman.

GENERAL PRESIDENT HOFFA: Mike 2.

DELEGATE JOHNSON: Mr. Chairman, I would request a point of privilege, please, sir.

GENERAL PRESIDENT HOFFA: You have it.

DELEGATE JOHNSON: My name is Tyson Johnson, elected delegate on the Hoffa/Keegel 2000 slate from Dallas, Texas. I will do my best not to delay or belabor these proceedings.

But as many candidates have in the last several days submitted a CCER report to the election administrator, in reviewing Tom Leedham's CCER, I find a \$10,000 contribution to his legal and defense fund from a Joseph Coyne, managing partner in one of the most anti-union law firms in this country.

(A chorus of "Boos" from the delegation.)

If I could, I would direct to Mr. Leedham, "Give it back, Tom."

(Cheering and applause)

GENERAL PRESIDENT HOFFA: Settle down. Let's get back to order here. Those comments were out of order. All right. Let's move on here. Everybody calm down. We will have an orderly convention.

I want to thank Pete Hoekstra; he did a great job. It's always good seeing him.

REPORT OF THE CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE

GENERAL PRESIDENT HOFFA: Our next order of business will be a Partial Report of the Constitution Committee. We will be considering a package of Constitutional amendments that deal with mergers and with the recent mergers of three international unions into our union. We will be considering two amendments. The reason we are considering these amendments now is because that way people who intend to run will be able to conduct the work that they need